

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

INR-10 LAB-06 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 L-03 PA-04 PRS-01

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R 061538Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5071

USINT CAIRO

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12829

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, ELAB, ETRN, ETRD, XF

SUBJECT: ICATU CALLS FOR ECONOMIC WARFARE

REF: A. BEIRUT 12616; B. TRIPOLI 1400

1. BEIRUT MEDIA HAVE GIVEN SCANTY COVERAGE THUS FAR TO RESOLUTIONS OF ICATU EXTRAORDINARY MEETING. EVEN CONFEDERATION OF LEBANESE LABOR (CLL) LEADERS LACK DETAILS OF TRIPOLI CONCLAVE, PENDING RETURN OF CLL DELEGATION WHICH HAS STOPPED OVER AT CAIRO TO ATTEND ICATU CENTRAL COUNCIL MEETING THERE NOV 6. SESSION OSTENSIBLY
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WILL DECIDE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ECONOMIC WARFARE PROPOSALS.

2. UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, CLL AND GOL SOURCES CONTINUE EXPRESS BELIEF THAT THEY CAN AVOID BOYCOTT ACTION. LEBANESE SUSPECT ICATU EXERCISE TO BE INSPIRED BY SYRIANS AND OTHER ARAB EXTREMISTS (WITH SOME QUIET HELP FROM USSR) "PROGRESSIVE" SYRIANS APPEAR DESIROUS OF JERKING CARPET OF ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OUT FROM UNDER "REACTIONARY, CAPITALIST" LEBANESE. SYRIAN EFFORTS PARTICULARLY RESENTED SINCE THEY COME SO SOON AFTER PRESSURE ON LEBANESE ECONOMY ENSUING FROM BORDER-CLOSING LAST SUMMER.

3. HENCE, CLL LEADERSHIP AND GOL WORKING IN TANDEM TO UNUSUAL LENGTHS. NOTABLY, AFTER CLL LEADERS CAREFULLY SELECTED FOUR-MAN DELEGATION TO TRIPOLI ON BASIS MAXIMAL LOYALTY AND RELIABILITY, LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS BRIEFED THEM, PROVIDING WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS ON TACTICS THAT MINISTRY HAD CLEARED WITH BOTH FOREIGN MINISTRY AND BOUTROS DIB OF PRESIDENCY.

4. INSTRUCTIONS (COPY PASSED TO EMBASSY ON CLOSE HOLD BASIS) PROVIDE GAMUT OF ARGUMENTS TO DELAY BOYCOTT, RANGING FROM PROCEDURAL (INSISTENCE UPON UNANIMITY) TO ECONOMIC (PUT WORKERS OUT OF JOB, ADVERSE EFFECTS ON LEBANESE ECONOMY, PROPOSED EXEMPTION OF BEIRUT SO IT CAN CONTINUE TO SUPPLY ARAB HINTERLAND WITH US SUPPLIES NOT OTHERWISE OBTAINABLE) TO POLITICAL (ARAB GOVTS SHOULD BE CONSULTED BEFORE ANY ACTION TAKEN). AS FALL BACK POSITIONS IN FACE OF STRONG PRESSURES TO INSTITUTE BOYCOTT MEASURES, PAPER RECOMMENDED (1) ARGUING FOR REFERRAL OF MATTER BACK TO NATIONAL FEDERATIONS IN VIEW OF ITS IMPORTANCE AND (2) LIMITING BOYCOTT TO SHIPPING IN FIRST INSTANCE.

5. COMMENT: WE INCLINED BELIEVE GOL AND CLL WILL BE ABLE FIND WAY AVOID ANY MEANINGFUL BOYCOTT ACTION, PROVIDED CEASE-FIRE HOLDS AND ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT APPEARS BE MOVING TOWARD PEACE TALKS RATHER THAN ANOTHER ROUND OF WAR. IN EVENT LATTER SITUATION PREVAILS, WE BELIEVE THAT EVEN LEBANON WOULD BE FORCED PARTICIPATE TO SOME DEGREE IN WHAT WOULD PROBABLY BE LARGE-SCALE ARAB BOYCOTT EFFORT.
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